How to take care of your own mouth

Nowadays, most people realise that their own care of teeth and gums is as important as the attention they get from their dentist. Your dentist works to save your teeth and keep your gums healthy. He knows that those patients who play their own part in mouth care seriously, can reduce the chances of trouble and help to keep their teeth.

Regular dental attention and regular cleaning using the right methods will greatly reduce dental disease. It is worth making that little extra effort—even late in life—to do the job the right way.

The right way to use your toothbrush

1 Remember that it is just as important to brush your gums as your teeth.

2 Always brush from the gums towards the biting surfaces of the teeth—downward in the upper jaw, upwards in the lower, cleaning the upper and lower jaws separately.

3 Start with the sides of the bristle on the gum, then turn the brush inwards and sweep the bristles from the gums over the teeth—as if trying to brush the gums over the teeth. In this way you stimulate the circulation in the gums, making them firm and strong, and clean out food debris from the spaces between the teeth.

4 Never brush backwards and forwards except when scouring and polishing the biting surfaces of the back teeth.

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The outer sides of all the teeth

1 upper

Hold the brush with the bristles upwards and their sides pressed against the gum. Rotate the brush downwards over the gums and teeth.

2 lower

Brush upwards with the same rotating motion, but starting with the bristles pointing down.

Brush all the way round using twelve strokes for each section. You will find it easier to reach the very back teeth, both upper and lower, if you close your mouth when the brush is in; this lets the cheeks and muscles go loose and gives more room.

Inside the back teeth

3

upper

The brushing stroke is the same as for the outside, but starting on the gums on the palate.

4

lower

Brush up from the gums; you will very likely find this the most awkward place at first, but it soon becomes easy.

Behind the front teeth

5

upper

A different approach gives the best results here. Hold the brush vertically and, starting on the palate, pull the brush down and forward over the gums and teeth.

6

lower

Use the same method, but pull the brush upwards, of course.

Biting surfaces of the back teeth

7

upper

Brush these surfaces with a to and fro movement—the only place where this horizontal stroke is permissible.

8

lower

5 RULES FOR DENTAL HEALTH

1 Always clean your mouth first thing in the morning, last thing at night and, if possible, after every meal.

2 Clean the upper jaw—outside, inside and on the biting surfaces.

3 Clean the lower jaw—outside, inside and on the biting surfaces.

4 Rinse the mouth thoroughly; with clenched teeth force the water through them with a pumping action.

5 Clean the toothbrush under a fast running cold tap, and hang it up to dry.

If your gums are inflamed and tend to bleed easily, or if you need any additional attention, such as massaging the gums and using wood points between the teeth, see your dentist who will tell you what to do.

Remember–

the care you give your own mouth yourself can add many years to the healthy, useful life of your teeth. Do your part, AND SEE YOUR DENTIST REGULARLY.

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